

Lemon Verbena

Family	Verbenaceae
Botanical	Aloysia triphylla
Parts Used	Leaves and flowers
USDA Hardiness	8A - 10B
Light	Full Sun
Soil	Well drained
Duration	Tender Perennial



Propagation Soil pH requirements: 6.1 (mildly acidic) to 7.8 (mildly alkaline).
From softwood cuttings, plant does not set seed, flowers are sterile.

Water As needed, do not overwater

Growing Although it is frost-tender, this plant will not grow well in hot, humid climates unless it is given some shade from midday sun. Lemon verbena grows best in loose, well-drained soil that's rich in organic matter, and drainage is the more important of those two characteristics. Neither clay nor very acidic soils are hospitable to lemon verbena; a lot of sand and a little lime, respectively, seem to be the best remedies. Though moisture-retentive soil is often recommended, lemon verbena will rot if its roots are constantly wet. Fertilize lemon verbena as you would any other herb plant: as often as every two weeks indoors or every four weeks in the garden when the plant is growing vigorously, less during periods of slower growth, and not at all during dormancy. In spring, following winter dormancy, some gardeners apply fish emulsion or other fertilizer to encourage growth to begin.

Medicinal Uses Antispasmodic, aromatic and carminative.

Benefits Lemon verbena makes a delightful medicinal herb tea that soothes stomach spasms and calm nerves and reduces fevers.

Preparation Lemon verbena makes an excellent tea - place four leaves in a cup of boiling water, let it stand for five minutes, stir, strain, add a slice of lemon and a touch of honey and sip slowly to ease tension, anxiety, stress and indigestion and to reduce fever. Its calming, soothing properties seem to ease a feverish cold, relax muscles, ease asthma, colic, flatulence and diarrhea.

Fines Herbes

Culinary Uses

It is great for potpourri, or to flavor teas, fruits, and cookies. Bruise the leaves and add to sugar overnight. Sift out the leaves and use sugar for cookies or cakes.

I treat dried lemon verbena leaves like bay leaves. Since the leaves are rather coarse and dry, I try to use them whole-leaf so they can be removed at the end of cooking. If leaves are not or cannot be used whole, then chop them fine or, better yet, whirl in food processor or blender to make a powder. Fresh leaves are best for cooking.

Lemon Verbena Bread Recipe

- 1 stick unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon verbena leaves, chopped
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 cup sifted flour
- 2 large eggs
- Pinch of salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 cup milk
- Grated rind of 1 lemon
- 3/4 cup chopped nuts (optional)

Glaze

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons lemon verbena leaves, chopped
- Juice of 1 lemon

1. Cream butter with verbena leaves in mixer or food processor. I use my food processor. Add sugar and beat well. Then add eggs, salt and remaining ingredients.
2. Grease loaf pans—1 large, 2 small or 4 minis—and pour in batter. Bake at 350 degrees for 60 to 65 minutes. I usually bake it in one large pan. Bake until bread tests done with a toothpick or cake tester. Meanwhile, prepare glaze. (Heat herb leaves, lemon and sugar in saucepan and simmer for 3 min.)
3. Leave loaf in pan. While it is still hot, pour glaze over it and let sit several hours. Remove loaf from pan. Wrap in foil to ripen overnight before serving, or freeze immediately.



Historical Facts

In ancient times, Lemon Verbena was said to have purifying properties and was used to clean altars after each ceremonial ritual. The Romans used the herb to make a love drink and it was said that a small amount added into their lover's drink would inspire passion. The ancient Greeks put dried leaves of Lemon Verbena into their pillows to promote pleasant dreams. Native to South America, Lemon Verbena was introduced to Europe by the Spanish and was used primarily in perfumes. Introduced to North America in the 1800's, the herb's clean, sharp lemon fragrance made it a favorite in gardens. Its scent, inspired many to call Lemon Verbena the Queen of lemon-scented herbs. In the movie *Gone with the Wind*, Lemon Verbena was mentioned as Scarlet O'Hara's mother's favorite plant.

Additional Tips

Nutrition Facts

Lemon verbena extract has also been shown to contain high levels of verbascoside, a powerful antioxidant also found in olives. Verbascoside may have anti-inflammatory properties that protect the body from oxidative stress, making it an effective treatment against joint diseases such as osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.